



STATE OF MINNESOTA

## Violent Crime Coordinating Council

c/o Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs

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Washington County Chief Deputy Brian Mueller, Chair

Sartell Police Chief Jim Hughes, Vice Chair

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### **Violent Crime Coordinating Council Minutes – Wednesday, December 11th, 2019**

Minnesota Department of Corrections - 1450 Energy Park Drive – Pung Conference Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor- St. Paul

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Members present:** Andy Dunne, Richard Dusterhoft, David Voigt, Axel Henry, Jim Hughes, Pat King, Brian Mueller, Darwin Melin, John Littlewolf, Drew Evans, Mark Uner and John Gross.

**DPS staff:** Kate Weeks, Brian Marquart, Kristin Lail and Allison Scott.

**Speakers/Guests:** Anthony Cortilet, Rick Moldenhauer, Ross Ardoft and Frank Caira.

#### **Meeting Materials:**

- 12/11/19 VCCC Agenda
- 2020 VCET Grant Awards
- 10/9/19 Meeting Minutes
- 2020 VCCC Committees
- 2020 Meeting Schedule

#### **Welcome, introductions and announcements**

Chair Brian Mueller called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. VCCC members and guests introduced themselves.

***M/S/P Hughes/Dunne to approve minutes from 10/9/19 meeting.***

***M/S/P Melin/Littlewolf to approve the 12/11/19 meeting Agenda.***

#### **Committee Updates**

Drew Evans reported that the Professional Standards Committee met before the meeting and reviewed 2019 peer review site visit reports and follow-up reports. He noted that five of six issues identified had been corrected and one additional follow-up was planned. They also reviewed the final outcomes of internal affairs investigations related to VCET operations. Brian Marquart identified a few items related to confidential informants and confidential funds for updating the Guidelines Manual. Members were asked to provide input on any other recommended changes. There was no update from the Community Engagement Committee. For the Governance Committee, Brian Mueller summarized the mediation process with the law enforcement coalition on proposed forfeiture legislation. Primary issues were combining forfeiture with the criminal case and increasing thresholds for seizures.

#### **Partner Updates**

Andy Dunne provided an update on the increased guns, drugs and gang cases handled by the U.S. Attorney's office in the past two years. Acting DEA Agent In Charge Frank Caira was introduced and welcomed to the VCCC.

### **Statewide Commander Update**

Brian Marquart reported on five site visits and two new commander meetings. He has been participating in the Department of Health CBD guidelines development group also working with the Department of Agriculture Industrial Hemp project. The Minnesota National Guard provided funding for money counting machines to 9 VCETs so now all 21 have them and are working on connecting through the HIDTA program.

### **Minnesota Industrial Hemp Pilot Project**

Anthony Cortilet explained the permitting process in the state industrial hemp pilot project, authorized through a federal farm bill. He noted that under current hemp rules, THC levels must be under .3 percent and staff conduct site visits to fields and test regularly. Starting with 8 growers on 38 acres in 2016, it has expanded to 310 growers on about 8,000 acres. In 2018, hemp was removed from the federal controlled substances schedule which resulted in emergence of CBD products and production. They are holding on issuing additional permits in 2020 to engage partners and develop guidelines and a state/tribal plan.

Brian Marquart provided additional information on the MDH workgroup was established to specifically address CBD products including labeling requirements, advertising, unsubstantiated health claims, and safety standards for edibles.

### **DHS Treatment Trends**

Rick Moldenhauer presented data from the DAANES treatment admissions system. The primary substance people seek treatment for is alcohol. The second was previously marijuana, but now is meth, followed by heroin and other opioids. There has also been an increase in IV drug use, most commonly with meth and heroin, resulting in significant increases in HIV infections and hepatitis C.

After a break for lunch, the meeting continued with a VCET highlight.

### **CEE-VI Gang and Narcotics Task Force Presentation**

Ross Ardoff from the Kandiyohi Sheriff's Office provided an overview of the Coordinated Enforcement Effort started in 1990, now serving 5 counties in Western Minnesota. They are funded with a \$5 per capita county tax levy which supports task force operations. They also use asset forfeiture funds to purchase investigative equipment. Methamphetamine is the primary drug of choice in the area, but they are also seeing heroin, fentanyl and a few large scale marijuana grow operations. He noted that changes in drug laws and sentencing guidelines have increased the expense and complexity of building narcotics cases. They also track gang affiliations and drug trafficking linked to organized groups. Case highlights included a large seizure interdicted through mailed packages and follow-up investigations with other task forces, state and federal drug enforcement.

### **VCET Update**

Kristin Lail announced the 2020 VCET grant awards, noting that one was switching to a different fiscal agency. Applications were reviewed by peer groups in September and recommendations presented to Commissioner Harrington in October. He is supportive of the work of the VCETs and discussed how improved information sharing could increase collaboration. OJP continues desk reviews and closeouts of 2019 grants and will be compiling data for the next VCCC meeting. They will be working with Alliant Consulting again next year to conduct operational reviews of all 21 VCETs. The 2020 committee list and meeting schedule is included in meeting materials.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

### **Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the VCCC will be held on Wednesday, February 12th, at the Minnesota Department of Corrections. VCCC Executive Committee will meet via conference call in January to determine the meeting agenda.